

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 480

Recognizing and honoring the historic election of women to the Kuwait parliament and its implications for gender equality in the region.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2009

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring the historic election of women to the Kuwait parliament and its implications for gender equality in the region.

Whereas four women lawmakers won parliamentary seats for the first time in Kuwait's general elections on May 16, 2009, marking an historic event for the country, the region, and for women's rights;

Whereas the women elected to parliament in this historic election include Dr. Massouma al-Mubarak, Dr. Rola Dashti, Dr. Salwa al-Jassar, and Dr. Aseel al-Awadhi;

Whereas Dr. Massouma al-Mubarak was also appointed as the country's first female cabinet member in 2005 and is a long-time advocate in the field of women's rights in Kuwait;

Whereas Dr. Rola Dashti is the 2005 winner of the King Hussein Humanitarian Award, the first woman elected to chair the Kuwaiti Economic Society, and an advocate for social equality and a larger role for women in public life;

Whereas Dr. Salwa al-Jassar is an education professor at Kuwait University and chair of the Women's Empowerment Center;

Whereas Dr. Aseel al-Awadhi is a philosophy professor at Kuwait University and stressed the importance of outreach to the youth in Kuwait throughout her campaign;

Whereas of the 210 candidates running for the 50 parliament seats, 16 of these were women;

Whereas women received the right to vote and run for office in 2005 and these elections represent only the third time that women have participated in the political process, signifying dramatic progress for women's rights in only four years since receiving suffrage;

Whereas these results signify support of women's role in government and politics and a move towards equal rights for women, adding a new precedent to Kuwait's democratic traditions;

Whereas the four women elected did so without formal organized party support or a quota-based system for seats in parliament, making this a significant achievement for democracy in the region;

Whereas these candidates ran for office and women exercised their right to vote in the face of conservative backlash and calls for a boycott of women candidates; and

Whereas the political process and subsequent election of women to the parliament were conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes and honors the historic election
3 of women to the Kuwait parliament and its implica-
4 tions for gender equality in the region; and

5 (2) honors those who fought for women’s suf-
6 frage and advocated for the advancement of the sta-
7 tus of women in Kuwait.

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